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October 15, 2003

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Taylor Wins Seed Science Award

By John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: Alan G. Taylor, a Cornell University professor in the department of horticultural sciences, has won the 2003 Seed Science award for distinctive service in the development and use of quality seeds in agriculture. The award will be presented by the Crops Science Society of America at the National Agronomy meetings in Denver in November.

Principle criteria for the award are significance and originality of research, contributions to extension and service activities, educational activities relating to training seed scientists, international contributions, and professional interactions with seed related organizations. Taylor will receive a plaque and a \$1,000 honorarium donated by Pioneer Hi-Bred, the company that sponsors the award.

In cooperation with vegetable extension specialists and others with responsibilities to the New York vegetable industry, Taylor, whose work can best be described as "modern seed technology," has worked on a range of topics for multiple stakeholders. His research ranges from the applied aspects of seed technology to more fundamental aspects of seed biology. Approximately 75 percent of his effort is devoted to vegetable seeds; the remainder is devoted to agronomic and other species.

Taylor's work includes development of practical seed quality tests, understanding factors limiting germination and stand establishment, evaluation of new sowing methods, and pest control of seeds and seedlings. Taylor's lab at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY, has pioneered the development of rapid seed quality tests for large-seeded legumes and other important agronomic and horticultural crops. This research has focused on biochemical parameters of seed quality and the detection of seed aging. Taylor and his colleagues are also leaders in the development of seed coating, specialized seed conditioning, priming and other technologies to enhance germination and stand establishment. This effort is directed primarily to high-value horticultural crops, and conducted in cooperation with colleagues at Cornell, other universities and industry.

Taylor has the only university-based program in the US with facilities and expertise for application of seed treatments, including low volume application, film coating, and rotary pan technology. His lab has become the hub for seed coating and seed treatment programs at Cornell and other universities, including Canadian institutions. He maintains cooperative projects with many pest management specialists.

"It is an honor to receive the Seed Science award in recognition for my research on vegetable seeds. I am most pleased as this was awarded by the Crop Science Society of America that focuses on agronomic crops," Taylor said. "The Station provides a work environment for faculty to excel, and attain state, national and



Alan G. Taylor

international recognition. Mission-oriented research is complemented by excellent cooperators, resources and facilities. Moreover, creativity in research is fostered that benefits many stakeholders," Taylor added.

Taylor came to Geneva in 1981 as an assistant professor. He was promoted to associate professor in 1987 and full professor in 1997. He earned his B.S. in Biology (Botany) from Heidelberg College, his M.S. in Horticulture from Michigan State University, and his Ph.D. in Horticulture from Oklahoma State University. Taylor attributes much of his interest in application of science to agriculture, in particular vegetable crops, to H. Price and J. Motes, who were his mentors while he was at Michigan State University.

Taylor is a member of CSSA, ASA, ASHS and ISSS. He serves as associate editor for *HortScience*, and is on the editorial boards of Agronomy Series of the Electronic Journal of Polish Ag. Universities, International Journal of Plant Varieties and Seeds, Seed Technology, Journal of New Seeds and Scientia Horticulturae. Taylor is the current chair of the multi-State project, W-168, and ASHS Seed and Seedling Establishment working group. In addition, Taylor teaches a course on Seed Science and Technology at the Ithaca campus.

Over 50 people have worked in Taylor's lab including Cornell and other students, summer interns, technicians, post-docs, visiting fellows and faculty from other institutes on sabbatical. He has mentored a global network of people representing 17 countries in his lab, and developed numerous collaborative arrangements with scientists in other disciplines including entomology, pathology, plant physiology, biochemistry, anatomy and breeding, food science, carbohydrate chemistry, biophysics, and engineering. "This interaction provides a wealth of expertise and facilities to support the study of seed biology and technology," Taylor noted.

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Last Modified: October 15, 2003
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